



The Spectacle

From the Office Down the Hall

Standing beneath the spreading bows of the magnificent Deodar Cedar tree in the Arlington House courtyard—a tree tiny in the 1870s—it is almost hard for us to imagine having a passing conversation with a resident of the plantation. Yet when the US Army restored the slave quarters in the 1920s, they were able to speak to people that had actually been living on the plantation as slaves. These were people that woke up in these now “historic” buildings, breathed dust kicked up from horses in the courtyard and, when asked by Army restorers, could point to specific rooms and recall what happened there: where missing doors were, what color things were, etc. Unfortunately, their accounts did not always agree with each other. Lewis Carroll said, “It’s a poor sort of memory that only works backward.”

Nonetheless, the Army did a pretty good job restoring the quarters. Inevitably, however, they made a few mistakes. Some of these were glaring to later restorers when they looked at Civil War era photographs, but some were very subtle and may not have been mistakes at all. Consequently, we have inherited a confusing pile of fiberglass meat and a legacy of infilled windows and doors with no apparent destination or means to get through them. A white rabbit brandishing a watch would almost fit right in.

So if memory is so suspect when working backward, how do we remember forward? We learn; we uncover memories through painstaking discovery, and we project what we have found into a future restoration. This month, archeologists will begin remembering forward. Starting in the middle room of the south slave quarters and also along the western wall of the south wing of Arlington



Arlington House, The Robert E. Lee Memorial

House, a team of four archeologists will start uncovering memories *we* have not yet had. They will be digging holes all over the place.

The archeology project will continue through the winter and spring and will eventually include investigations beneath all the rooms of the slave quarters, much of the foundation of Arlington House, and the path through the vegetable garden. We are trying to confirm memories of ladders and larders, we are looking to see when and how the foundations may have been waterproofed.

The archeologists will attend our 9 o’clock staff meetings at least once a week to share their discoveries and their plans. One of our jobs during this period will be to keep pace with this information so we can answer questions. Also, we will all need to watch for

safety hazards associated with this project. There will be holes and disorder, so please be careful walking around the dig locations and intercept visitors that may be straying too close or overly bending the ear of one of the archeologists when they should be sifting dirt! Hopefully, we will also see some media attention on this effort. I would like to see this work serve as an impetus to fundraising; we still need over \$100,000 in matching funds to satisfy our Save America’s Treasures grant commitment. Keep this in mind as you go about your business in your other lives spent away from Arlington House—we need all the support and good ideas we can muster. Tell your friends about the work underway at Arlington House.

This is a very exciting time of discovery for all of us. I know, as volunteers, you have full

lives away from Arlington House and that many weekends may pass before you are able to join us for a day of work. Robert Lynd, an early sociologist once said, "There are two sorts of curiosity—the momentary and the permanent. The momentary is concerned with the odd appearance on the surface of things. The permanent is attracted by the amazing and consecutive life that flows on beneath the surface of things." I hope this project has piqued your curiosity, because your continued dedication shows that yours is a permanent one.

Kendell Thompson
Site Manager
Arlington House,
The Robert E. Lee Memorial

School Programs to Begin in November

Volunteers who are interested in providing special school tours and leading hands-on activities to 3rd and 4th grade students during the 2003-2004 school year should contact Arlington House as soon as possible.

Student itinerary will include a tour of the house and various activities. Large classes will be divided into groups and participate in demonstrations in gardening, art and clothing. The programs will take place on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10:00 AM to 11:30 AM. Volunteers are asked to arrive by 9:30 AM and stay until 12:00 PM. Volunteer assistance in providing staff relief during these hours in lieu of school tours would also be appreciated.

Holiday Decorating Set for the week of December 7

Arlington House will be decorated the week of December 7th, in keeping with Christmas customs and traditions observed by the Custis and Lee families. Volunteers interested in helping with decorating duties should notify Delphine.

Christmas Program

Arlington House's annual Christmas Program will be presented on Sunday, December 14th, 2:00-4:00pm. This year's program will include an interpretive talk "December 1860, the Last Christmas." Musical entertainment will be provided by Arlington's Yorktown High School Madrigal Singers. Anyone interested in volunteering a few hours to assist with this special program should notify Delphine.



You and your guests are cordially invited to
Arlington House's Annual Christmas Program
and
Volunteer Appreciation Holiday Celebration
Sunday, December 14, 2003
The Christmas Program will be presented from 2 P.M. until 4 P.M.,
and the holiday celebration will be held in the Old Administration Building (Park Service Office) from 4 P.M. until 6 P.M. (after the Christmas Program)
Please join us and celebrate the holiday season at Arlington House

Hollywood History

Park Rangers will host screenings of a variety of Civil War era films. A discussion of the film's accuracies and how the subject relates to the people of the Arlington Estate will follow.

The films will be shown in the conference room of the Old Administration Building (OAB). Light refreshments will be served.

There is a 20 person limit per film and reservations are required. Call 703 235-1530 to reserve space for any film.

| Date and Time | Film | Park Ranger |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------|
| November 9, 2003 2:00 pm | "Jezebel" (1938) | Karen Kinzey |
| November 15, 2003 12:00 pm | "Dances With Wolves" (1990) | Keith Drews |
| November 23, 2003 2:00 pm | "The Undefeated" (1969) | Matt Penrod |
| January 3, 2004 12:00 pm | "Gangs of New York" (2002) | Frank Cucurullo |

Significant Historic Events in November

November, 1851

The 125-foot steam ferry, *George Washington Parke Custis*, was launched from a Washington shipyard. Expressly designed to navigate the shallow waters of the Potomac near Arlington, the *Custis* was flat-bottomed and drew only one foot of water. During the Civil War the Federal Navy stripped the ferry of its engines and boilers and transformed it into a floating ascension deck for observation balloons—the first such vessel in the world.

November, 1855

The renovation of the White Parlor was nearly complete, and Lee writing from Fort Riley, suggested that a view of (or from) West Point should be hung in that room.

November, 1858

The improvements at Arlington begun by Robert E. Lee were all under way despite his impatience at his lack of money. Many of the buildings, roads and fences had been repaired, and by winter there would be a new slate roof on the house and a new gravel one

on the stable. The mill and the overseer's house were put back in repair, and stone foundations were laid for a new barn.

November, 1845 (late)

Eight-year-old W.H.F. "Rooney" Lee cut off two of his fingertips—one down to the first joint—while playing with a straw cutter at the Lee's home in Fort Hamilton, New York. Mrs. Lee postponed her planned trip to Arlington. Lee himself was gravely concerned that if the fingertips could not be successfully reattached, Rooney would be maimed for life. Though surgery was unsuccessful, the fingers eventually healed so well that they were virtually unnoticed and prove no handicap to Rooney's future careers.

November 1, 1829

Brevet Second Lieutenant Robert E. Lee arrived in Savannah, Georgia. His assignment, his first since graduating from West Point, was to assist in the construction of a fort on Cockspur Island—later named Fort Pulaski—for the defense of the city. Lee worked at Cockspur until April 21, 1831, when he was assigned to Old Point Comfort (Fort Monroe), Virginia.

November 5, 1781

John Parke "Jack(ey)" Custis died of "camp fever" at "Eltham" near Yorktown shortly after the British surrender on October 19. According to family tradition, General Washington said, "From this moment I adopt his two youngest children as my own"—GWP and Eleanor "Nellie" Custis.

November 5, 1873

Mrs. Robert E. Lee, 65, died at Lexington, Virginia, 92 years to the day after the death of her grandfather, Jack Custis. Her daughter Agnes had died on October 15, and according to Mildred Lee, she never "rallied from this blow."

November 6, 1860

Abraham Lincoln was elected President of the United States. His election was a catalyst for secessionist activity in the South.

Commenting on the election, the *Charleston Mercury* said, "the tea has been thrown overboard, the revolution of 1860 has been initiated."

November 11, 1857

Robert E. Lee, having obtained leave from his command in Texas arrived back at Arlington, two and a half weeks after the death of his father-in-law, GWP Custis. In his memorandum book he wrote, "Found all sad, suffering and sick, and the chair of him who had always recd. me with kindness and affection—vacant."

November 15, 1796

George Washington wrote to his ward, GWP Custis, a student at the College of New Jersey at Princeton: "It gives me pleasure to hear that you are agreeably fixed. I receive still more from the assurance you give of attending closely to your studies. It is you yourself who is to derive immediate benefit from there. Your country may do it hereafter."

November 20, 1839

Lawrence Lewis, 73, died at Arlington. Mrs. Lee's uncle had been taken ill on his way home to Woodlawn from Audley, where he and his wife had been visiting their son Lorenzo Lewis. He had been brought to Arlington and died there a few days later.

November 21, 1826

In an installment of his *Recollection of Washington* entitled "His Portrait," GWP Custis described the General's appearance and physique. "Most portraits of the General, he said, made him appear too bulky, instead of tall and lean. Describing Washington's physical prowess as a horseman and athlete, he told how the General had once thrown a piece of *slate* the size and shape of a silver dollar across the Rappahannock River below Fredericksburg."

November 22, 1857

Writing to Harriet Talcott, Mrs. Lee described her second child, Mary Lee Custis,

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National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Arlington House was the home of Robert E. Lee and his family for thirty years and is uniquely associated with the Washington and Custis families. It is now preserved as a memorial to General Lee, who gained the respect of Americans in both the North and the South.

Arlington House
The Robert E. Lee Memorial
c/o George Washington Memorial Parkway
Turkey Run Park
McLean, VA 22101

Phone
703-235-1530

Web Site
<http://www.nps.gov/arho>

The National Park Service cares for the special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.

Area Special Events

November 7-9

Tour, "Richmond, Then & Now," includes Richmond, Virginia and area sites, plus Seven Days battlefields, more. \$195. Sponsored by the Civil War Education Association, 800-298-1861 or cwea@earthlink.net.

November 8

Living history, "We Believed They Would Never Come," battle experience of Gettysburg citizens, at the Rupp House History Center, Friends of the National Parks at Gettysburg headquarters, 451 Baltimore St in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. 2 and 3:30 pm. Free. www.friendsofgettysburg.org or 717-334-0772.

Living history, "Camp Life of Confederate Soldiers," at the National Museum of Civil War Medicine in Frederick, Maryland. 11 am-3 pm. Free with admission. 301-695-1864 or www.civilwarmed.org.

November 8-9

Living history, "Meet Our Living Historians," displays and discussions by Union, Confederate and civilian re-enactors at the National Civil War Museum in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. Free with admission. 717-260-1861 or www.nationalcivilwarmuseum.org.

Living history, "Americans at War - 1607 to Present," at Pamplin Historical Park south of Petersburg, Virginia. Free with admission. 877-PAMPLIN or www.pamplinpark.org.

November 13-16

Tour, "Firestorm in Baltimore: Abraham Lincoln and Civil Liberties: A Field Tour," based in Baltimore, Maryland. \$295. Sponsored by the Civil War Education Association, 800-298-1861 or cwea@earthlink.net.

November 15

Civil War Discovery Workshop, "A Civil War Christmas at Historic Kenmore," takes a look at holiday civilian life in December 1862, at Kenmore in Fredericksburg, Virginia. 10:30 am-noon. \$9. House tour included. Reservations and prepayment required. 540-

370-0732 or email muller@gwffoundation.org.

Remembrance Day Parade and Ceremony in Gettysburg. Parade begins 1 pm followed by ceremony in Ziegler's Grove. 1st Annual Luminaria in the Soldiers' National Cemetery, Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. 6-9 pm. Activities at the Rupp House History Center 5-10 pm. 717-232-7000.

November 15-16

Annual Fall Open House at the Surratt House Museum in Clinton, Maryland. 301-868-1121 or www.surratt.org.

Civil War show, all types of Civil War artifacts for sale plus educational exhibits at the Richmond Raceway Complex, 600 E. Laburnum, Richmond, Virginia. 9 am-5 pm Saturday, 9:30 am-3 pm Sunday. \$5. 804-798-6817 or capconcwsho@yahoo.com

November 16

Special program, "US Marine Corps and Navy in the Civil War," at the National Museum of Civil War Medicine in Frederick, Maryland. 11 am-3 pm. Free with admission. 301-695-1864 or www.civilwarmed.org.

November 18

Special program, "Two Wars, Two Ships," discussion of Yorktown's *Betsy* and the *Monitor* at the Manassas Museum, Manassas, Virginia. \$5. Details: 703-368-1873 or www.manassasmuseum.org.

November 19

Anniversary commemoration of Lincoln's Gettysburg Address at the Soldier's National Cemetery in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. 10 am. Free. 717-334-1124 or www.nps.gov/gett.

November 22

"Blue and Gray Ball," a black-tie or period costume fund-raiser for the John Singleton Mosby Museum Foundation at the Fauquier Springs Country Club in Warrenton, Virginia. Living history presentations, period music and photography, more. Doors open 5:30 pm. \$85 per person until Oct. 31. 540-351-



1600 or www.mosbymuseum.org.

Special program, "Maine Camp Hospital Association," the story of a relief agency at the National Museum of Civil War Medicine in Frederick, Maryland. 11 am-3 pm. Free with admission. 301-695-1864 or www.civilwarmed.org.

November 23

Special children's program, "War Hits Home (Baltimore)," hands-on presentation at the Baltimore Civil War Museum, Baltimore, Maryland. Ages 7-12. 1-3:30 pm. \$15 per child. Reservations: 410-685-3750.

November 27-30

Living history, "Thanksgiving," construct winter huts with the soldiers, see food preparation and artillery demonstrations, more at Pamplin Historical Park, south of Petersburg, Virginia. Free with admission. 877-PAMPLIN or www.pamplinpark.org.

November 29

Living history, "Confederate Surgeon," at the National Museum of Civil War Medicine in Frederick, Maryland. 11 am-3 pm. Free with admission. 301-695-1864 or www.civilwarmed.org.

November 29-30

Living history, "A Civil War Christmas," 19th-century Santa Claus, caroling, dancing and more at the National Civil War Museum in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. Free with admission. 717-260-1861 or www.nationalcivilwarmuseum.org.

Joy Kinard moves on



I have truly enjoyed working with the Arlington House volunteers. The Open House events, Christmas programs and parties, the book club events, I truly appreciated your kind words and conversations that have brightened my day many times. I have worked at many parks and the level of commitment that you have invested in this site is unmatched. Which I think is great and commendable.

On November 3, 2003, I will become a permanent staff member at the Mary McCloud Bethune Council House in Washington, DC. My new position will allow me to learn more about developing educational programs and the famed Civil Rights leader Mary McCloud Bethune. I will cherish my two years at Arlington House and intend to always keep my great experiences and the memories of the people I worked with in my heart.

New Ranger



Howdy. I'm Tom Downs, a new temporary ranger at Arlington House. (Yes, another proud Texan) I'm from San Antonio. Yee-haw. I will be working here through the holidays. I came over from the Virginia District where I was a seasonal ranger this past summer. As a ranger with the Virginia staff my primary duties were Fort Hunt picnic permits. I was fortunate enough however to assist with junior ranger programs and conduct my own educational program to children at a public library. So, this is my second park job. I am very excited to be here and look forward to learning as much about Arlington House and Robert E. Lee as possible. I enjoy fly-fishing, golf, hiking, history, and sports. I am currently seeking a permanent position within the ranger interpretation series in the National Park Service. I look forward to meeting and working with you all.

Open House Thank You



A special thank you to Patricia Bohn, Walter DeGroot, Stephanie Edewaard, Rebecca Jones, Lisa Kittinger, Charlotte Needham, Jim Pearson, Delia Rios, Lou Smith, Elaine Street, Judy Volonoski and Nona Wartella for your time, desire and dedication in making this year's open house a great success.



The stairs on the north side of the portico are being repaired. Feel free to have a look.

AN IMPORTANT REMINDER

Please contact Delphine Gross no later than the 20th of each month with availability dates and times to be posted the following month (Please call by November 20th with December information). Even if you are a regularly scheduled VIP please contact Delphine to confirm your availability. Again, the contact number is (703) 235-1530 ext. 227. Please leave the dates and times you are available on the voice mail. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.

Significant Historic Events in November (continued)

(continued from page 3)

as “a clear brunette with brown hair, very fine large black eyes, and a perfect little mouth and respectable nose and is perfectly fat and healthy.” She also mentioned, however, that she had been bedridden for almost four months after giving birth to Mary on July 12.

November 22, 1918

Mary Custis Lee, 83, died at Homestead Hotel, Hot Springs, Virginia eleven days after the signing of the Armistice which ended World War I.

November 24, 1810

The *National Intelligencer* published extracts from an address of GWP Cusits in which he advocated soil conservation, national self-sufficiency, a National Board of Agriculture, and an “Order of Washington” to recognize those who “shall do some good to mankind, either in the progress of national aggrandizement, or productive industry.”

November 24, 1860

From his post in Texas, Robert E. Lee wrote to his son Custis that the “Southern States seem to be in a convulsion and confidence in their securities shaken. It is difficult to see what will be the result, but I hope all will end well...My little personal troubles sink into insignificance when I contemplate the condition of the country, and I feel as if I could easily lay down my life for its safety. But I also feel that would bring but little good.”

In the same letter Lee expressed regret that Montgomery Meigs had been removed from his engineering position in Washington because of what Lee believed to be a feud between officers. “I know Meigs to be capable and qualified.”

November 28, 1862

General Lee asked his wife to “arrange for the people whom I wish to liberate the 31

December...Perry, Billy and such of those as are at the White House as wish it or who can support themselves, must be included. Indeed I should like to include the whole list at Arlington, White House, and c., if it can be done so as to finish the business.”

November 30, 1859

Robert E. Lee arrived at Harper’s Ferry about noon to command troops ordered to guard the arsenal from threatened attack during and after the scheduled execution of John Brown on December 2 at Charlestown, ten miles away. “At Harper’s Ferry nothing more exciting happened than the arrival of Brown’s body and its transshipment to Philadelphia.” Lee and the troops were returned to their respective stations on December 12. “The country continued to debate bitterly the rights and wrongs of Brown’s attempt, but the affair seems to have affected Lee very little.”

RECIPE OF THE MONTH

Dressing for Cole Slaw

3 eggs beat light – butter size of an egg – tea spoon salt – 2 of mustard – ½ of pepper – vinegar – boil it like custard.

3 eggs
¼ c. butter
½ - 1 t. salt
2 t. dry mustard
2 - 3 t. vinegar
2 - 3 T. milk or cream

In the top of a double boiler or in a very heavy pan, whisk eggs until light and place over simmering water or very low heat. Whisk in other ingredients, continuing until sauce thickens. If too thick, whisk in a little more milk or cream.

(From Anne Carter Zimmer’s *The Robert E. Lee Family Cooking and Housekeeping Book*)

November 2003

Arlington House VIP Calendar

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|---|---|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|--|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| | | | | | | 1 |
| 2 Jim Pearson 12:30-4:30 | 3 | 4 Fred Hoffman 1:00-4:00 | 5 | 6 Walter DeGroot 9:30-2:00 Elaine Street 10:30-2:00 | 7 Joan Cashell 9:30-12:30 | 8 Nona Wartella 1:00-4:00 |
| 9 Nona Wartella 10:30-1:30 Jim Pearson 12:30-4:30 | 10 Jo Schoolfield 10:00-2:00 Fred Hoffman 1:00-4:00 | 11 Fred Hoffman 1:00-4:00 | 12 Anne Cake 12:00-3:00 | 13 Walter DeGroot 9:30-11:30 Elaine Street 10:30-2:00 | 14 Joan Cashell 9:30-12:30 | 15 |
| 16 Jim Pearson 12:30-4:30 | 17 | 18 Fred Hoffman 1:00-4:00 | 19 Anne Cake 12:00-3:00 | 20 Walter DeGroot 9:30-2:00 C. Needham and Elaine Street 10:30-2:00 | 21 Joan Cashell 9:30-12:30 | 22 |
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| 30 Jim Pearson 12:30-4:30 | | | | | | |

If you are available to volunteer, but are not on the calendar please call Delphine so you can be added to the schedule.



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Arlington House
The Robert E. Lee Memorial
c/o George Washington Memorial Parkway
Turkey Run Park
McLean, VA 22101

<<Name>>
<<Address>>
<<CityStateZip>>

EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA™

The Spectacle is a monthly newsletter for the volunteers of Arlington House, The Robert E. Lee Memorial.

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Comments? Write to:

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Volunteers Needed

The roster of active volunteers is in dire need of additional names! If you know anyone interested in joining our ranks please refer them to Delphine Gross, Volunteer Coordinator (703) 235-1530 ext. 227.

